

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI  
SOUTHEASTERN DIVISION**

LARRY L. HOPKINS,	)	
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	
v.	)	No. 1:13-CV-126-LMB
	)	
UNKNOWN REED, et al.,	)	
	)	
Defendants.	)	

**MEMORANDUM AND ORDER**

This matter is before the Court upon the motion of Larry L. Hopkins (registration no. 531113) for leave to commence this action without payment of the required filing fee. For the reasons stated below, the Court finds that plaintiff does not have sufficient funds to pay the entire filing fee, and therefore, the motion will be granted and plaintiff will be assessed an initial partial filing fee of \$7.82. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1). Furthermore, based upon a review of the complaint, the Court finds that this action should be dismissed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B).

**28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1)**

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1), a prisoner bringing a civil action in forma pauperis is required to pay the full amount of the filing fee. If the prisoner has insufficient funds in his prison account to pay the entire fee, the Court must assess and, when funds exist, collect an initial partial filing fee of 20 percent of the greater

of (1) the average monthly deposits in the prisoner's account; or (2) the average monthly balance in the prisoner's account for the prior six-month period. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1). After payment of the initial partial filing fee, the prisoner is required to make monthly payments of 20 percent of the preceding month's income credited to the prisoner's account. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). The agency having custody of the prisoner will forward these monthly payments to the Clerk of Court each time the amount in the prisoner's account exceeds \$10, until the filing fee is fully paid. *Id.*

Plaintiff has submitted an affidavit and a certified copy of his prison account statement for the six-month period immediately preceding the submission of his complaint. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(1),(2). A review of plaintiff's account statement indicates an average monthly deposit of \$39.08, and an average monthly account balance of \$6.78. Plaintiff has insufficient funds to pay the entire filing fee. Accordingly, the Court will assess an initial partial filing fee of \$7.82, which is 20 percent of plaintiff's average monthly deposit.

#### **28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)**

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B), the Court must dismiss a complaint filed in forma pauperis if the action is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. An action is frivolous if it "lacks an arguable basis in either law or

fact." *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 328 (1989). An action is malicious if it is undertaken for the purpose of harassing the named defendants and not for the purpose of vindicating a cognizable right. *Spencer v. Rhodes*, 656 F. Supp. 458, 461-63 (E.D.N.C. 1987), *aff'd* 826 F.2d 1059 (4th Cir. 1987). An action fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted if it does not plead "enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face." *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007).

To determine whether an action fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, the Court must engage in a two-step inquiry. First, the Court must identify the allegations in the complaint that are not entitled to the assumption of truth. *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 129 S. Ct. 1937, 1950-51 (2009). These include "legal conclusions" and "[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action [that are] supported by mere conclusory statements." *Id.* at 1949. Second, the Court must determine whether the complaint states a plausible claim for relief. *Id.* at 1950-51. This is a "context-specific task that requires the reviewing court to draw on its judicial experience and common sense." *Id.* at 1950. The plaintiff is required to plead facts that show more than the "mere possibility of misconduct." *Id.* The Court must review the factual allegations in the complaint "to determine if they plausibly suggest an entitlement to relief." *Id.* at 1951. When faced with alternative explanations for the alleged misconduct, the Court may exercise its judgment in

determining whether plaintiff's conclusion is the most plausible or whether it is more likely that no misconduct occurred. *Id.* at 1950, 51-52.

Moreover, in reviewing a pro se complaint under § 1915(e)(2)(B), the Court must give the complaint the benefit of a liberal construction. *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972). The Court must also weigh all factual allegations in favor of the plaintiff, unless the facts alleged are clearly baseless. *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 32 (1992).

### **The Complaint**

Plaintiff, an inmate at the Southeast Correctional Center ("SECC"), seeks monetary and injunctive relief in this 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action against SECC correctional officers Unknown Reed, Unknown Thurston, Unknown Cooper, and Unknown Irby. Plaintiff alleges that in September 2012, defendants used excessive force against him, were deliberately indifferent to his serious medical needs, and retaliated against him for filing a complaint.

### **Discussion**

At the outset, the Court notes that plaintiff has filed a motion to stay the instant action on the ground that he is "waiting for the final exhaustion in the prison grievance process." Plaintiff states that he is "submitting [his] complaint at this time for [a] file number," because his time for filing is running.

Under the Prison Litigation Reform Act, “[n]o action shall be brought with respect to prison conditions under section 1983 of this title, or any other Federal law, by a prisoner confined in any jail, prison, or other correctional facility until such administrative remedies as are available are exhausted.” 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a). Exhaustion is mandatory. *Porter v. Nussle*, 534 U.S. 516, 524 (2002). Where, as in the instant case, it is apparent from the face of the complaint that a plaintiff has not met the applicable exhaustion requirements, a Court may properly dismiss an in forma pauperis complaint prior to service. *Cf. Smith v. Unknown Corrections Officer*, 196 Fed.Appx. 451, 2006 WL 2620837 (8th Cir. 2006). As noted above, plaintiff concedes that he did not exhaust his available administrative remedies before filing the instant action. Therefore, his claims presently are barred by 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a).<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly,

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that plaintiff's motion for leave to proceed in forma pauperis [Doc. #2] is **GRANTED**.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that plaintiff shall pay an initial partial filing fee of \$7.82 within thirty (30) days from the date of this Order. Plaintiff is instructed

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<sup>1</sup>To determine the applicable limitations period for § 1983 claims, federal courts borrow state statutes of limitations for general personal injury claims. *Owens v. Okure*, 488 U.S. 235, 249-50 (1989). In Missouri, the applicable limitations period for general personal injury claims is five years. Mo. Rev. Stat. § 516.120(4) (2000).

to make his remittance payable to "Clerk, United States District Court," and to include upon it: (1) his name; (2) his prison registration number; (3) the case number; and (4) that the remittance is for an original proceeding.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the Clerk shall not issue process or cause process to issue upon the complaint, because plaintiff has failed to exhaust his prison grievances. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a).<sup>2</sup>

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that plaintiff's motion for stay [Doc. #4] is **DENIED** as moot.

A separate Order of Dismissal shall accompany this Memorandum and Order.

Dated this 10th day of September, 2013.

**/s/Jean C. Hamilton**  
**UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE**

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<sup>2</sup>This dismissal shall not count as a strike against plaintiff for purposes of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g).